

Children of the Sun by Wraith LoverQueen

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Summary: Steve, now a major part of the Upside Down opposition family, has finally found his place in life. Even if that means taking the Party camping and keeping from them that he's not feeling so great. He should have known better than to go anywhere with The Party and expect it to be normal. He should have realized that the hell of the Upside Down would find them all again.

Children of the Sun

A/n: Disclaimer: I own nothing!

Okay. So, this is my first Stranger Things fic ever! I just binge watched both seasons last weekend and fell in love. I adore Steve and I hurt the characters I adore. So, yeah, this won't be a pleasant ride for him. I hope you all enjoy it.

Please comment if you enjoy. It inspires me to write faster and I just adore hearing that people are enjoying the story.

Also, I feel like I need to put this out there: As a fan, I am extremely anti-Harringrove. If Billy is ever mentioned, it will never be in a good light. Just a heads up for people who like Billy.

When the darkness comes, keep an eye on the light - whatever that is for you - no matter how far away it seems.

- Jan Berry

March 1985

It was the ceaseless chittering that was getting to Steve. His head was pounding today, but he hadn't risked saying so. This was supposed to be the kid's special weekend and if he told them he was in pain, they would demand that he stay home.

But, that might actually be worse. Seeing as his parents didn't know about his new health condition.

The doctors called the condition "Post-Traumatic Migraine Disorder". It was caused by head trauma and minor brain damage from that trauma. That diagnosis had been hard to hear.

Steve was man enough to admit that he had had a bit of a breakdown in Mrs. Byers' arms at the news.

No one wanted to hear that they had brain damage at the age of eighteen. Steve felt self-conscious about his intelligence to begin with, so learning he had brain damage made him lose all hope of a

bright future at college. This caused him to drift towards depression.

The only light leading off that dark path was the love of six little teens that seemed to have imprinted on him like ducklings.

This was how he had gotten suckered into this little camping trip. Hopper was taking the six kids into the woods for a weekend of camping so that El could spend some time safely with The Party. As soon as the subject had come up, Dustin had immediately rushed to Steve and begged him to come along.

Steve found himself unable to say no to the younger boy. He really wasn't much for camping, it had never been a part of the parent-dictated childhood he had had. So, it was still rather new for him.

What Steve really wanted to know was how Max had convinced her parents to let her come on a trip full of teenage boys.

These thoughts though were blanked from Steve's mind as his pain increased. The growing volume of the kids' excited shatter was sending a spike of agony through his eye. He felt like his head was splitting open.

God, he just wanted to lay in a dark, quiet room and sleep it off.

"Steve?" Dustin's concerned voice drew Steve's wavering focus. He could feel the younger boy's hand pressed gently to his flank, obviously trying to ground Steve. It worked enough to make the high schooler's pain-glazed eyes slide open. His lethargic attention shifted to Dustin.

"Hey, Bud. What's up?" He asked softly, exhausted smile slipping onto his face. But, this only seemed to worry the younger teen more.

"Are you okay? Does your head hurt? Do you need your meds?" The younger boy asked frantically in quick succession, increasing his lisp slightly. His hand had begun to fist slightly in Steve's jacket.

Dustin had not taken the news of Steve's new lifelong disorder well. While his initial reply had been a concerned string of swears and then a ramble about migraine care, that had not been his worst reaction. No, the latter was much worse.

Dustin was the first of The Party to be told. Steve had confessed it secretly in Dustin's room for Steve's own comfort. He hated being even more intellectually inferior to The Party.

Steve had sat down on the edge of Dustin's bed while Dustin explained some new project Steve didn't understand. But the older boy listened all the same to be supportive, sitting there quietly and petting Tews as the cat laid on his lap. He hadn't said a word since they had gotten in the room.

Noticing this, Dustin had flopped down to sit next to Steve. He had gently asked what was wrong, small encouraging smile on his face. Though, it slipped away as the older boy just shrugged weakly in reply.

He just watched Steve hug Tews before the older teen actually spoke to Dustin. Dustin slowly started to feel sick as Steve spoke. The older boy told him softly how the fight with Billy had resulted in some minor brain damage. Told him that Steve was now suffering from migraines fairly frequently since the fight.

This had been hard enough but Dustin seemed to be taking the news as well as could be. Which wasn't great to be honest, as the younger boy started to swear in panic. But, that was minor compared to the reaction of what Steve said next.

Steve told him then that he was stable right now. But, there was a chance that the migraines might not be the only problem. That there was a chance he could deteriorate mentally in the future.

The response he got was not pleasant.

Steve could remember letting out a bit of a yelp as Dustin suddenly threw up on the carpet. He rushed to get his friend the nearest wastepaper basket for the rest of Dustin's stomach contents. While the poor kid finished up, Steve got a warm wet cloth.

He came back and gently wiped his friend's mouth once he was done, parental instincts kicking in. Though, as soon as he cleaned Dustin's mouth, Steve was practically tackled to the bed. The younger boy was on top of him, sobbing into Steve's shirt and clinging to him.

Steve had been horribly confused, not understanding what had brought on this reaction. That is, until Dustin started babbling apologies and explaining how it was all his fault. How if Dustin had never asked for Steve's help then Steve would never have been at the Byers' house and therefore never have gotten in the fight with Billy.

Steve tried to tell him that a little brain damage was worth keeping Dustin and his friends safe. But, Dustin just wasn't listening. Steve ended up holding Dustin until the kid cried himself to sleep, emotionally exhausted. Steve felt very much the same and shifted them so that he could curl protectively around his duckling.

He must have fallen asleep for quite a while because it was dark by the time Mrs. Henderson woke him. He had been insanely glad that the woman didn't question why a legal teenager was in bed curled around her minor son. Especially with the mess still on the floor.

But no, instead she offered him dinner but he had to decline. He had to be getting home. He was left wondering if he had done the right thing by telling Dustin. Since it led to their current situation: Dustin freaking out about Steve anytime the older boy showed signs of even the tiniest pain.

"I'm fine, Dusty." Steve whispered as his hazy thoughts drifted back to the present. He smiled tiredly at his friend and ruffled Dustin's curls. It was nice to actually be cared about but he hated worrying the kid.

Dustin opened his mouth to protest but Steve gently led him to the side of the room. He raised a finger, telling him to be quiet. Dustin pouted but did as he was told.

"Seriously, Dust, I'm okay. You don't need to worry about me all the time." Steve gently reassured him.

"B-but, maybe this trip's a bad idea. Maybe you should stay home and rest." The younger teen squeaked softly, worried.

"This trip's important, right?"

"Well, yeah! None of us have seen El for like a month!" Dustin felt so torn right now. He wanted to see and hang out with El but also

wanted Steve to rest. Maybe Steve could just stay home?

Anymore of the conversation was cut off by a distressed and disappointed sound coming from the rest of The Party. Steve frowned, mood ruffled at hearing his ducklings upset. His attention was drawn to them and he guided Dustin back to the group.

"What's going on guys?" He asked as he watched Dustin move over to say something to Will.

"Hopper cancelled the trip!" Mike exclaimed frantically. Steve grimaced, hearing the panicky edge to the boy's voice. He knew it was because The Party's leader was desperate to be with El again. And honestly, Steve couldn't blame him.

He knew what that kind of love felt like.

"Why?" Steve gently touched his hand to Mike's shoulder, grounding the poor kid in reality.

"Beacu-!" Mike cut off as Hopper spoke up over him.

"It's cancelled because I got work to do. Sounds like I'm gonna be gone all weekend." Hopper grunted as he settled his hat down onto his head, "Looks like we'll have to do it a different weekend." All the young teens whined in disappointment, especially Max and Mike. Mike because he needed to see El and Max because she knew she wouldn't get another chance like this.

Steve swallowed thickly, just watching the kids. His heart hurt and his gut twisted just looking at their dejected faces. He felt awful. They had been looking forward to this all week.

"W-what if I take them? By myself." Steve asked cautiously, pushing his growing pain to the back of his mind. That was a feat all its own but he had to try. He wanted to give this to the kids.

Steve stood there a bit self-consciously. His lack of security showed in the slight droop of his shoulders. He was not the boastful, over-confident jock when he was with this family. No, because these people knew him better than all the people Steve had known since childhood.

This was his chosen family. The people that had willingly taken him in, let his true self flourish.

Hopper took a drag on his cigarette. He looked to the side, casting a glance at Joyce. Both adults were extremely overprotective parents with good reason.

Still, Steve's heart did a bashful flutter when a gentle smile slipped onto Mrs. Byers' face. He flushed softly as the woman stepped up to him and lovingly took his hand. God, how many times in the past few months, since the closing of the gate, had Steve wished that this beautiful person was his mother.

"W-would you, Sweetheart?" She asked softly, her voice always having that kind but nervous edge to it. She looked at him with such tenderness. She took both his hands in hers, shaking them gently, "That'd be wonderful, Steven. Thank you. This means so much to the kids."

Steve's cheeks were pink and he dipped his head slightly, nodding. He always felt so safe and vulnerable around this woman. He loved that freedom.

"Harrington." Hopper addressed him gruffly before clapping him on the shoulder, "Remember to radio if you need somethin'."

"Yes, Sir." Calling male authority figures 'Sir' was ingrained into Steve from young childhood by his father. That never seemed to leave even around Hopper.

"Yeah. Get goin', Kid." Hopper gripped at the teen as he patted and mussed up Steve's hair affectionately before heading towards the front door with Joyce.

Steve felt a streak of pride jolt through him. It actually wasn't an emotion he got to feel often because so many people just beat him down verbally, emotionally, and physically. But here, with the trust of two such tormented and worried parents, he finally felt proud of himself for something. He had earned their trust and respect as a babysitter for their abused children.

He really couldn't ask for a greater honor.

His real reward, even though he'd never admit it, was being mobbed by The Party. Excited and loud, they practically tackled him in their excitement. Even little Will was showing a bit more enthusiasm than his usual drugged-like state.

"Yeah, yeah, okay. Hands off, you little Shits." Steve snarled to save face and hide the fact he was actually enjoying the attention. He looked up at Dustin, the only Party member to not join in. Steve gave him a kind look before mouthing the words: 'it'll be okay'.

With that moment of comfort, Dustin finally joined his friends around Steve. This allowed the older boy to listen to the Party plan out their ideas for the trip. It was terrifying for Steve about as much as it was satisfying.

He had never realized how much he had needed these obnoxious little brats in his life before.

~*~Chapter End~*~

A/n: Post-traumatic migraines are real. My mother has them from repeated face trauma when she was a child.